

INSIDER

destination sofa

Don't worry if you can't get away this month; there's plenty to watch instead

IF YOU WATCH ONE THING THIS MONTH

The Man Who Cycled The Americas

Two wheels, two mountains and 12,500 miles is the latest challenge for world record holder Mark Beaumont

In February 2008, Scottish cyclist Mark Beaumont became, at the age of 26, the world record holder for cycling around the globe. Having pedalled the 18,296 miles in a mind-blowing 194 days, it might be assumed that he would never want to see a bike again, let alone get back on the saddle. But you can't keep a good man stationary, and so, last May, Mark pumped up his tyres for another epic journey.

On this eight-month quest, he's changed axis and is taking on the might of the American Cordillera – the longest mountain range in the world, running for 12,500 miles from the northern Alaskan ranges,

through the vast Rockies, and down to the Andes.

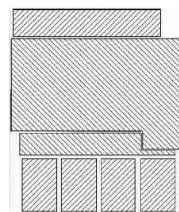
The Man Who Cycled The Americas charts Mark's progress as he makes his way along the backbone of two continents. The first major challenge sees Mark attempting to conquer North America's highest mountain, Mount McKinley, in a blizzard, a three-week task, which pushed him to his not-inconsiderable limits. 'It was epic,' he explains, 'the scariest mountaineering I have ever done. As far as an adventure, it was everything I could have hoped for.'

The next episodes follow Mark as he cycles for 183 days across the

USA, heading south for the next mountain in his path, Argentina's domineering Aconcagua – the highest summit in the Americas. If successful in climbing this too, Mark will become the first man ever to climb and cycle between the Americas' biggest mountains – an achievement he believes might even outweigh that of circumnavigating the globe. 'Going around the world was about endurance on the bike, but there is far more to this challenge, because climbing really involves beating the odds. There are hundreds of factors that are completely out of my control this time.'

It's a Herculean effort, but for all his physical feats, Mark is just as fascinated by the perspective travelling across a country on two wheels gives him. 'Not only do you see so much more of a country from the seat of a bike, the way you are perceived by local people completely changes,' he says. 'Somehow riding in on a bike breaks down barriers, and means that you are really welcomed into communities – it gives you a more intimate and real view of a place.'

one *The Man Who Cycled The Americas* starts 15 March. Visit bbc.co.uk/cyclingtheamericas.



Mark Beaumont's quest
takes him through diverse
landscapes, such as Arches
National Park in Utah.
BELOW RIGHT A quick
photo op in Montana

